

Lesson 8: 았/었/였어요

In this lesson, you will learn how to take the dictionary form of a verb and change it into the past tense by adding **았어요**, **었어요**, or **였어요**. If you remember how to change verbs into the present tense from lesson 3, then changing verbs into the past tense is really easy.

KEY INFORMATION

았/었/였어요 = Past tense ending

Conjugation Rule 1: Last vowel in verb stem isㅏ orㅗ + **았어요**.

Conjugation Rule 2: Last vowel in verb stem is NOTㅏ orㅗ + **었어요**.

Conjugation Rule 3: Verb ends in **하다** + **였어요**.

As you learned in previous lessons, the first thing you need to do before conjugating a verb is to take the dictionary form of the verb and remove **다**. This will leave you with the ‘verb stem’. For example, the verb stem of **먹다** [**meok-da**] (to eat) is **먹** [**meok**].

Once you have the verb stem, the next step is to attach the past tense ending **았어요**, **었어요**, or **였어요**. Just like the present tense, the ending you attach is determined by the final vowel in the verb stem. Let’s look at the rules for each of these endings.

았어요 [a-sseo-yo]

If the last vowel in the verb stem is either **ㅏ** or **ㅗ** then we attach **았어요 [a-sseo-yo]** to the verb stem to get the past tense. Let’s look at an example:

살다 [sal-da] = to live (dictionary form of verb)

살 [sal] = live (verb stem)

살았어요 [sa-ra-sseo-yo] = lived (past tense)

As you can see, after removing **다** from the verb **살다** you are left with the verb stem **살**. The last vowel in **살** is **ㅏ** and so to make the past tense you must attach **았어요** to make **살았어요**.

Lesson 8: 았/었/였어요

었어요 [eo-sseo-yo]

If the last vowel in the verb stem is NOTㅏ or ㅗ then we attach **었어요** [eo-sseo-yo] to make the past tense. Here is an example:

먹다 [meok-da] = **to eat** (dictionary form of verb)

먹 [meok] = **eat** (verb stem)

먹었어요 [meo-geo-sseo-yo] = **ate** (past tense)

였어요 [yeo-sseo-yo]

If a verb ends in 하다, then we add **였어요** [yeo-sseo-yo] to change that verb into the past tense. (Originally 하+였어요 became 하였어요 but over time this became 했어요. All you need to remember is that 하다 verbs in the past tense are 했어요.) Here are some examples:

공부하다 [gong-bu-ha-da] = **to study** (dictionary form)

공부했어요 [gong-bu-hae-sseo-yo] = **studied** (past tense)

청소하다 [cheong-so-ha-da] = **to clean** (dictionary form)

청소했어요 [cheong-so-hae-sseo-yo] = **cleaned** (past tense)